

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG ETRN UR

SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET OFFICIALS DISCLOSE CONTINUING
ENERGY PROBLEMS IN USSR

REF: MOSCOW 13662

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFF ATTENDED RECENT ZNANIYE SOCIETY LECTURE
DEALING WITH FUEL AND ENERGY RESOURCES IN USSR. PRACTICI-
PANTS IN LECTURE REPRESENTED "WHO'S WHO" OF SOVIET ENERGY
SCENE, AND INCLUDED SUCH LUMINARIES AS MINISTER OF PETROLEUM
INDUSTRY, MINISTER OF POWER AND ELECTRIFICATION, AND CHAIR-
MAN OF STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. DISCUS-

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SION REVEALED ACUTE PROBLEMS IN AREAS OF OIL AND GAS EXTRAC-
TION, RELIABLE AND ECONOMICAL TRANSPORTATION OF ALL FORMS O

ELS,AND, ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY, SUPPLY OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY IN EUROPEAN SECTION OF COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKERS EMPHASIZED TREMENDOUS RESOURCES OF ALL KINDS OF MINERAL FUELS IN USSR, BUT ALSO STRESSED UNAVAILABILITY OF MUCH OF IT AS ENERGY SOURCE DUE TO GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND LOW TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL OF EXTRACTING INDUSTRIES, WHICH GREATLY HINDERS EXPLOITATION. FIRST DEPMIN OF GAS INDUSTRY STATED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TYUMEN' FIELDS CONTAIN MUCH MORE THAN COUNTRY AS WHOLE COULD CONSUME IN NEXT 15-20 YEARS BUT THAT "WE ARE UNABLE TO USE IT" (UPOTREBLYAT' EGO NE MOZHEM) DUE TO SHORTAGE OF QUALITY PIPES, COMPRESSORS, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT.

3. SPEAKERS ALL OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING USABLE FUELS TO INDUSTRIAL CONSUMERS. ACADEMICIAN STYRIKOVICH (SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS-TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OF POWER ENGINEERING, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES) STATED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IN SPITE OF ATTEMPTS TO SHIFT INDUSTRY TO SIBERIA, I.E., CLOSER TO ENERGY RESOURCES INCLUDING VAST HYDROELECTRIC POTENTIAL, EUROPEAN PART OF USSR WILL ALWAYS CONSUME AT LEAST TWO THIRDS OF ALL ENERGY IN COUNTRY. THIS DISCUSSION TOOK TWO MAJOR DIRECTIONS: IMPROVING TRANSPORT SYSTEM (CURRENTLY WOEFULLY INADEQUATE, IT WAS ADMITTED) AND REDOUBLING EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF COAL, OIL, AND GAS IN EUROPEAN USSR.

4. MINISTER OF POWER AND ELECTRIFICATION NEPOROZHNIY PAINTED PARTICULARLY GLOOMY PICTURE OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY SUPPLY SITUATION IN EUROPEAN USSR, STATING CANDIDLY THAT THIS PART OF COUNTRY IN MIDST OF POWER HUNGER (ENERGETICHESKIY GOLOD). ON ONE HAND, THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF FUELS TO OPERATE POWER GENERATING STATIONS AT FULL CAPACITY; ON OTHER HAND, POWER INDUSTRY STILL NOT CAPABLE TECHNICALLY OF TRANSFERRING ELECTRIC POWER EFFICIENTLY FROM SIBERIAN HYDROELECTRIC STATIONS TO EUROPEAN USSR. FURTHER, COUNTRY RUNNING BEHIND PLAN GOALS IN CONSTRUCTION OF NEW POWER STATIONS DUE TO SHORTFALL IN LEVEL OF CAPITAL INVESTMENTS.

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5. COMMENT: LEVEL OF SPEAKERS AT LECTURE LENDS CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY TO THEIR STATEMENTS. COUNTRY CLEARLY FACING CONTINUING LONG-TERM PROBLEMS IN EXTRACTING ENOUGH FUEL TO SATISFY NEEDS OF INDUSTRY AND POWER GRID AND, PARTICULARLY, IN TRANSPORTING THESE FUELS TO PLACES OF CONSUMPTION. INTENSIFICATION OF FUEL EXTRACTION IN EUROPEAN USSR MAY ALLEVIATE SITUATION OVER SHORT TERM, BUT IN LONG RUN CAN ONLY HAVE SAME UNFORTUNATE RESULTS AS DID STRIPPING OF FORESTS IN EUROPEAN SECTION. END COMMENT

6. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, QUARTER-PAGE ARTICLE IN DEC 26 MOSKOVSKAYA PRAVDA, DEALING WITH MOSCOW CPSU GORKOM MEETING, IS DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO REPORT BY VP. ISAYEV, FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF MOSCOW CITY*COUNCIL, ON MEASURES BEING TAKEN IN CAPITAL TO SAVE FUEL AND ENERGY RESOURCES DURING UPCOMING WINTER PERIOD. CITY MANAGERS, ENTERPRISE DIRECTORS, TRANSPORT WORKERS, AND THOSE ENGAGED IN CONSTRUCTION ARE EXHORTED TO TAKE ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO SAVE FUEL AND ELECTRICITY. AT SAME TIME, STATED ISAYEV, ENERGY-SAVING CAMPAIGN SHOULD NOT RESULT IN NEGATIVE EFFECT ON SUPPLY OF HEAT TO APARTMENTS, KINDERGARTENS, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, AND STORES.

7. DETAILS OF LECTURE FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.SOMMERLATTE

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